

veterans centers to carry out their long standing mission of helping veterans. These provisions would also help ensure that VA has sufficiently trained outreach workers to encourage veterans to seek assistance. Veterans centers provide veterans with a safe place to turn for readjustment counseling or assistance; they make over 100,000 referrals a year for benefits and VA medical services. In addition to providing counseling services to veterans, family members too can find solace at veterans centers. This legislation would clarify that parents of those servicemembers who have died would be eligible to receive bereavement counseling at veterans centers.

The compromise agreement also addresses the goal of encouraging and supporting alternatives to institutional long-term care. It includes provisions derived from S. 2753, a bill I introduced, that was designed to promote assistance to those who look after veterans, especially in noninstitutional, home-based settings. The relevant provision in the compromise agreement would authorize VA to carry out a pilot program to assist family members who care for their disabled loved ones. Caregivers, particularly those who live in rural and geographically remote areas, would receive a helping hand through services such as adult day care and respite care.

Furthermore, the compromise agreement seeks to ensure more appropriate payment for the cost of long-term care provided to certain seriously disabled veterans who are receiving care in State veterans' homes. In January 2006, the committee held field hearings in my home State of Hawaii. Tom Driskill, the president and CEO of Hawaii Health Systems Corporation, testified about the soon-to-be-built State home in Hilo. He said, "The synergy of a combined Federal and State funding of the home has been the catalyst for making this dream a reality." The adjustments this legislation would make to the current cost-sharing arrangement between VA and the States, which are derived from S. 2762, legislation I introduced, will help ensure high quality care in State homes not only in Hawaii, but across the entire Nation.

Currently, care is provided at no cost to the veteran when VA provides institutional, long-term care services to those with service-connected disabilities rated 70 percent or higher in a VA nursing home or a private nursing care facility with which VA contracts. However, when the care is provided in a State veterans' home, VA pays only a per diem to the State, which then may bill the veteran for the remaining costs. This measure would provide for the same payment to State veterans' homes that is provided to community nursing homes.

This compromise agreement also includes a provision from a bill I introduced, S. 1537, that would authorize VA to designate at least two Multiple Sclerosis Centers of Excellence and six Par-

kinson's Disease Research, Education and Clinical Centers. VA centers of excellence have been the model of innovation in the delivery of highly specialized health care and research for chronic disease in the veteran population. Providing a statutory basis for these centers will ensure continued research and development of progressive treatments to help reduce symptoms and improve the quality of life for veterans battling with these neurological diseases. This provision is especially significant as it will be part of Congressman LANE EVANS' legislative legacy, as ranking member of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs. It is fitting that we pay tribute to his service through this measure. I thank my good friend and colleague for his leadership on this issue and for his service to our great Nation, as a marine and in Congress.

The compromise agreement includes a provision that would allow VA to extend its State Cemetery Grants Program to tribal organizations. This change, derived from my bill, S. 2659, would allow for the establishment, expansion, and improvement of veterans cemeteries on trust lands. If enacted, it will enable veterans living on trust lands to have an option for burial much closer to their family members and other loved ones.

Another provision in the compromise would authorize VA to provide home loan guarantees to veterans who want to use their home loan eligibility to purchase stock in a cooperative housing corporation. Under current law, VA is authorized to guarantee loans for eligible veterans and their survivors to build or buy a home, including residential condominiums. In many large cities, housing cooperatives make up a large percentage of available affordable housing. This provision, derived originally from legislation introduced by Senator SCHUMER, would give veterans greater housing choice by allowing them to use their hard-earned benefits to buy shares in a housing cooperative.

In response to the concerns of some individuals, the provisions in the compromise agreement related to allowing veterans and other claimants to hire attorneys to represent them before VA have been modified from what originally passed the Senate earlier this year, so as to allow individuals to hire attorneys only after a notice of disagreement has been filed in a case. This change should result in there being no impact on the claims adjudication system until after VA renders its first final decision. Currently, veterans are prohibited from retaining counsel until after the Board of Veterans' Appeals renders a final decision.

Additionally, I am pleased that we were able to reach a compromise on information security matters. I remain committed to ensuring that VA takes aggressive action to protect our veterans' personal information, and in the event of a data breach, that they provide the affected veterans with appro-

priate identity and credit protection services.

I also express my satisfaction at our success in maintaining the provisions in current law which prohibit the use of appropriated VA health care funds for conducting public and private cost comparison studies. This prohibition protects veterans by precluding the use of scarce health care dollars for other purposes and protects VA employees from efforts to privatize their duties.

This legislation is appropriate and needed at a time when our servicemembers are in harm's way. We must always remember the sacrifices that our servicemembers, both past and present, have made on behalf of this great Nation, and we must do our part to respond to their service by remaining strong in our support of veterans services.

I am proud that our committee continues its tradition of bipartisanship. The effort that produced the final version of this legislation, vital to the continued provision of quality health care and benefits to our Nation's veterans, is just the latest example of that spirit. I thank Senator CRAIG for his leadership and for his cooperation and assistance. I also thank the staff of the majority, especially Bill Cahill, Jon Towers, Amanda Meredith, Helen Walker, and Lupe Wissel, as well as those on the Democratic staff, Kim Lipsky, Alexandra Sardegna, Dahlia Melendrez, Ted Pusey, Michelle Moreno, and Bill Brew for their hard work on this legislation.

At this time, Mr. President, I would like to take the opportunity to wish my warmest aloha to Senator JIM JEFFORDS, who is retiring after 32 years in Congress. The Committee on Veterans' Affairs will be losing one of its finest and most esteemed members. A veteran himself, Senator JEFFORDS has been a strong voice and advocate for veterans. I thank Senator JEFFORDS for his service. He will truly be missed.

I urge my colleagues to support this compromise agreement on behalf of America's veterans and their families.●

RETIREMENT OF ANTHONY J. ZAGAMI

● Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, a well-respected public servant will soon retire after 40 years of outstanding service to our Government and the American people.

Anthony J. "Tony" Zagami first came to Capitol Hill in 1965, at the age of 13, to serve as a page in the United States Senate. Several years later, Tony returned as an assistant to the Secretary of the Senate. I was the whip for the Republican party at the time, and in this capacity, it was my privilege to work closely with Tony and the Secretary. Tony also spent 9 years as the general counsel to the Joint Committee on Printing, which I was ranking member of from 1987 to 1992.

Tony left the halls of Congress in 1990 to become general counsel at the U.S.

Government Printing Office, and he has remained in this post for the past 16 years. Tony's legislative background has proven to be a tremendous asset during his tenure as general counsel. His leadership and vision have helped transform the GPO into a profitable, efficient, and thoroughly modern organization.

In January, Tony will retire as the longest serving general counsel in the GPO's 145-year history. In honor of his many accomplishments, Tony has also been named the first general counsel emeritus of the GPO.

On behalf of my colleagues in Congress, I thank Tony for his dedication and hard work over the years. We all wish Tony, his wife, and their three children the very best.●

● Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, as the 109th Congress comes to a close, I would like to recognize a longtime public servant and Maryland resident. Anthony J. "Tony" Zagami will soon retire as the general counsel of the U.S. Government Printing Office after more than 40 years of Federal service. I met Tony during my first term in the Senate while he was finishing law school and working as a young intern in the Senate Democratic Cloakroom. Tony went on to serve in a number of other positions here on Capitol Hill before leaving in 1990 to become the general counsel for the GPO.

Tony Zagami began his Federal service as a page in the U.S. Senate during the 1960s and will end it as the longest serving general counsel in GPO history. Along the way, he also earned degrees from the University of Maryland School of Business and Public Administration and the George Mason University School of Law. Tony has earned the respect and admiration of many of us here in the Congress as well as his colleagues in other legislative branch agencies and the executive branch. I know that my colleagues here in the Senate would join me in wishing him all the best in health and happiness as he completes a very long and noteworthy career. In retirement, I'm sure that Tony will remain a very active citizen of Montgomery County, MD, where he resides with his wife, Erin, and three children.●

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE RECEIVED SUBSEQUENT TO SINE DIE ADJOURNMENT

ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

Under the authority of the order of the Senate of January 5, 2005, the Secretary of the Senate, on December 12, 2006, subsequent to the sine die adjournment of the Senate, received a message from the House of Representatives announcing that the Speaker had signed the following enrolled bills:

S. 214. An act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to cooperate with the States on the border with Mexico and other appropriate entities in conducting a hydrogeologic

characterization, mapping, and modeling program for priority transboundary aquifers, and for other purposes.

S. 1096. An act to amend the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to designate portions of the Musconetcong River in the State of New Jersey as a component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, and for other purposes.

S. 1378. An act to amend the National Historic Preservation Act to provide appropriation authorization and improve the operations of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

S. 1529. An act to provide for the conveyance of certain Federal land in the city of Yuma, Arizona.

S. 1608. An act to enhance Federal Trade Commission enforcement against illegal spam, spyware, and cross-border fraud and deception, and for other purposes.

S. 2150. An act to direct the Secretary of the Interior to convey certain Bureau of Land Management Land to the City of Eugene, Oregon.

S. 2653. An act to direct the Federal Communications Commission to make efforts to reduce telephone rates for Armed Forces personnel deployed overseas.

S. 2735. An act to amend the National Dam Safety Program Act to reauthorize the national dam safety program, and for other purposes.

S. 3821. An act to authorize certain athletes to be admitted temporarily into the United States to compete or perform in an athletic league, competition, or performance.

S. 4042. An act to amend title 18, United States Code, to prohibit disruptions of funerals of members or former members of the Armed Forces.

S. 4091. An act to provide authority for restoration of the Social Security Trust Funds from the effects of a clerical error, and for other purposes.

S. 4093. An act to amend the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 to extend a suspension of limitation on the period for which certain borrowers are eligible for guaranteed assistance.

H.R. 5682. An act to exempt from certain requirements of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 a proposed nuclear agreement for cooperation with India.

Under the authority of the order of the Senate of January 5, 2005, the enrolled bills were signed on December 12, 2006, subsequent to the sine die adjournment, by the Acting President pro tempore (Mr. FRIST).

Under the authority of the order of the Senate of January 5, 2005, the Secretary of the Senate, on December 13, 2006, subsequent to the sine die adjournment of the Senate, received a message from the House of Representatives announcing that the Speaker had signed the following enrolled bills:

S. 362. An act to establish a program within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the United States Coast Guard to help identify, determine sources of, assess, reduce, and prevent marine debris and its adverse impacts on the marine environment and navigation safety, in coordination with non-Federal entities, and for other purposes.

S. 707. An act to reduce preterm labor and delivery and the risk of pregnancy-related deaths and complications due to pregnancy, and to reduce infant mortality caused by prematurity.

S. 895. An act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to carry out a rural water sup-

ply program in the Reclamation States to provide a clean, safe, affordable, and reliable water supply to rural residents.

S. 2125. An act to promote relief, security, and democracy in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

S. 2205. An act to direct the Secretary of the Interior to convey certain parcels of land acquired for the Blunt Reservoir and Pierre Canal features of the initial stage of the Oahe Unit, James Division, South Dakota, to the Commission of Schools and Public Lands and the Department of Game, Fish, and Parks of the State of South Dakota for the purpose of mitigating lost wildlife habitat, on the condition that the current preferential leaseholders shall have an option to purchase the parcels from the Commission, and for other purposes.

S. 3421. An act to amend title 38, United States Code, to repeal certain limitations on attorney representation of claimants for benefits under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, to expand eligibility for the Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance Program, to otherwise improve veterans' benefits, memorial affairs, and healthcare programs, to enhance information security programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

S. 3546. An act to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act with respect to serious adverse event reporting for dietary supplements and nonprescription drugs, and for other purposes.

S. 3678. An act to amend the Public Health Service Act with respect to public health security and all-hazards preparedness and response, and for other purposes.

S. 4092. An act to clarify certain land use in Jefferson County, Colorado.

Under the authority of the order of the Senate on December 9, 2006, the enrolled bills were signed on December 14, 2006, subsequent to the sine die adjournment, by the Acting President pro tempore (Mr. LOTT).

Under the authority of the order of the Senate of January 5, 2005, the Secretary of the Senate, on December 18, 2006, subsequent to the sine die adjournment of the Senate, received a message from the House of Representatives announcing that the House agreed to the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 482) to provide for a land exchange involving Federal lands in the Lincoln National Forest in the State of New Mexico, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the House agreed to the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 486) to provide for a land exchange involving private land and Bureau of Land Management land in the vicinity of Holloman Air Force Base, New Mexico, for the purpose of removing private land from the required safety zone surrounding munitions storage bunkers at Holloman Air Force Base.

The message further announced that the House agreed to the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 1245) to provide for programs to increase the awareness and knowledge of women and health care providers with respect to gynecologic cancers.

The message also announced that the House agreed to the amendments of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 4588) to reauthorize grants for and require applied